

Hungarian University of Fine Arts
Doctoral School

Tactile whiteness.

Spatial graphic constructions, three-dimensional objectified images_
Forming an interactive connection with mycelium_
The relationship between contemporary art,
applied design and circular sustainability_

*(Conceptual artistic approach focusing on the study of diversity
and continuity, material and visual transformations)*

Doctoral Dissertation (DLA)

THESES

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”We learn everything from how nature organizes itself. There is such an interdependence. A tree doesn’t live alone, not even a small plant or organism; it’s about collective knowledge and making sure that the other survives so I can survive.”

Raquel Rosenberg

THE ASPECTS OF THE DISSERTATION, THE STAGES – OFTEN PROCEEDING IN PARALLEL – OF THE RESEARCH AND CREATIVE PROCESS

- Supported by applied, empirical and theoretical research
- Complex thinking, exploring new possibilities for cooperation with organic materials
- The novelty of the approach to the proposition and the problem
- The applicability, artistic value, role, functional possibilities and advantages of the chosen organic material, the living organism; production and technological conditions, presentation of the further market applications
- Applying an empathetic design mentality and ethical approach, questions and answers, open propositions, important messages for the future
- The relationship between nature, science, technology, art and/or design
- Forward-looking directions, the topicality of bioart-biodesign
- The selected biomaterial, the individuum of the mycelium
 - » The organic living material’s own way
 - » The creativity of organic matter – showing harmony and/or dissonance
 - » Interdependent relationship of influence and free flow
 - » The predictability of eventuality and managing the challenges, external factors and circumstances of unexpected change
 - » Mutual diversion and the right to arbitrary change
 - » Man’s controlling superiority and nature’s response
 - » Humble confidence or confident humility – who is in control?
 - » Refining the approach, adopting a defined direction and accepting the possibility of flexible change
 - » Dynamics of the back-and-forth relationship
 - » Understanding and accepting difference as a goal for co-creating on the same level
 - » A continuous flow of moral that influence and fertilise each other
 - » The liberating artistic result of struggle and release
 - » Depth and quality of the experimentation process
 - » Using failures, unexpected mistakes and incorporating them into a successful conclusion of results
- Developing a new semiotic sign system
- UV light effect, translatable communication structure, making the invisible visible and understandable

- Scent as a communication tool in the message
- The interacting process of own experiments in relation to the masterpiece, the conceptual structure of the series, the results of the visuality and the material interrelation
- The role of the Lab and its justification for the success of the project
- Formal and visual realisations, in which the hierarchy of mutual creative method plays an important role
- Food ink printability results and the golden smoke foil
- MAP and FYP series of the masterpiece and co-creation with mycelium
- The result of intentional diversion and an accidental error factor, i.e. the development and final appearance of the reliefs
- The 12 selected white shades for the MAP series – The White Relief.

I believe it is important to consciously build our design mentality around the sustainable, environmentally responsible approach we apply. To this end, it is essential to develop our knowledge, to follow ongoing innovative tendencies, to integrate research results into our own professional field, and the individual research integrativity. But we should not neglect experimentation as designers, exploring new application possibilities. According to Elvin Karana, the material-driven design mentality generates design sensitisation, whereby the evaluation of experimental results largely determines further design processes.

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of my research area, in order to combine environmentally conscious objects and artistic products, and their ethical yields, with the requirements of contemporary design in a proportionate and harmonious way, while at the same time achieving the symbiosis of practicality and aesthetics, it became necessary to conduct preliminary studies and thorough research in other disciplines indirectly related to the topic. All these inter-scientific excursions, moving from the exact to the abstract thinking, have contributed me, motivated by curiosity, to formulate my theme in an increasingly free and perhaps more daring way.

The dissertation will focus on research areas, findings, theoretical and philosophical analyses and, of course, psychological studies within the chosen topic, which explain the conceptual application of subconscious perception and intuitive effects – very consciously constructed – and deal with the psychoanalytic analysis of intuitive perceptions.

The aim of the experimental research is to investigate the physical interaction between different natural materials (paper, wood, bioplastic, PLA, hemp, organic waste) and the selected biomatter mycelium, in a series of fine art and graphic design surfaces, within an object; beyond the visual unity, harmonious appearance, how does the directed symbolisation, the natural scent process of mycelium and the artificially generated, consciously added scent affect our consciousness?

How is the message influenced by the flavour of the consumable sub-elements?
In what way does the tactile difference in form and surface guide communication?

In addition to visibility, we can also connect to the message through other perceptions, and we can use other forms of engagement such as functional participation, tactile „compulsion”, the experience of sound, or the impression enhanced by scent or even taste. All of these relate to each other as a whole, interweaving the idea in a complex way, interpreting the message, interactively engaging in interpretation. Like the mycelium, which, through its structural system, binds and structures the material basis offered to it. By tactile sensation, by feeling out the form, by stroking the special surfaces, by inhaling the scent of natural materials, we gain additional information that we cannot deprive ourselves of.

When designing, during the creative process, we must also take into account aspects whose examination, the summary of the results and the conclusion are directed towards the significance beyond their perception of visual signs – based on sight – and the mechanism of action of other sensory inputs, i.e. hearing, smell, taste, touch, which are consciously added. Do all of these help, amplify, accelerate and support the transmission of the message, or do they transform it, shape it, allow a freer and more informal interpretation and instinct? Do they add up and together make real sense, or do they form a series of juxtaposed pieces of information that are themselves legitimate and also open up intuitive reactions? As an artist, I have been particularly influenced by this questioning and the subsequent insights gained from these investigations, which have informed my work with my MAP and FYP series.

I find it extremely exciting and useful to conceptually develop graphic design and applied art products that focus on a responsible approach to art and social design. These aspects of the doctoral study and the masterpiece draw indispensably on revolutionary innovations in traditional and innovative bio-based materials, technological solutions, and own material experiments with a conscious approach, while combining interactively facilitating perceptual outcomes. I believe that this special field of research, the concept, prepared with due care and attention and based on professional experience, the material experiments carried out with humility and patience, according to a unique vision, result in creative products that, beyond the experimental summation and sense of creative pleasure, can also serve as a learning experience for other designers and applied artists.

A printed book, a personalised business card, product packaging, a series of artistic posters, a spatial graphical element or a handheld interactive board game creates value that will always be needed. But if we don't want to get stuck at an earlier stage, we need to keep our eyes open and complement what we already have with the latest technologies. We need to think in terms of forward-looking ideologies.

We need to lift from previous forms of manifestation all that has real value, and then combine the essential elements, stripped of all pseudo, with the latest, most promising trends. Thus, level-jumping, all this is complemented by the *zero waste* theory, which advocates the conscious use of *eco-friendly*, environmentally friendly, rapidly biodegradable, nature-based, and possibly *100% recycled* or reprocessed alternative, innovative materials, perhaps with a secondary function, which can make graphic design projects even more exciting and sometimes aesthetic. I believe that only in this way can we productively ensure that, despite the proliferation of online communication, applied art can continue to enjoy the value-retaining charm of tangible graphical typographical formal products.

ART – SCIENCE – ENGINEERING – DESIGN

Art is for expression in general, science for discovery, technology for implementation, design for communication. "Science transforms information into knowledge. And technique makes knowledge usable. Design turns utility into cultural behaviour and context. Art takes cultural behaviour and challenges the way we perceive the world. It shows that there is a flow of information, a flow of creativity between disciplines."

Quoting the thoughts of Neri Oxman, I myself believe that in art – be it architecture, object design, fine art work, fashion, applied art product, books, posters, packaging – interactivity is one of the most exciting approaches and interactions between creator, recipient, and user. It is undeniable that through visual perception a kind of active relationship is established, but I prefer complexity of the process, complementing the cognition through sight and vision with segments that I consider to be of equal importance. I trust in a positive design process driven by professional knowledge based on personal commitment and passion, and based on a thorough research work on multiple experiments.

In the 21st century, some of the most dynamic art is no longer created in the atelier, but in the laboratory, where artists explore cultural, philosophical and social issues through the most innovative scientific and technological research. Their work ranges from a wide variety of disciplines – microbiology, physical sciences, information technologies, human biology and living systems, kinetics and robotics – they cover everything from climate change and virtual reality to artificial intelligence.

The concept of existence is inherently challenging to conceptualise, particularly in the context of the evolution of life on Earth. The notion of existence is a difficult entity to visualise, as life emerged on Earth, as elements came together, as materials interconnected, as surfaces overlapped, as systems permeated the universe. Such is the relationship between the planets, the Earth and the universe, the origins and the materialised structures.

Fungi are living organisms that were the first on our planet to find the ability to interconnect, to take over spaces, to take over surfaces, to connect or disrupt almost anything in their path. This metaphorical symbiosis with the environment can form a closed system, but it never ends. At any time it can be connected to, carried on, lived on in a biometrically offered cycle. Living matter dictates, but humbly embraces and gives way to all other living organisms, systems on Earth, including humans. It is a theory whose intricacy is intangible, a totality that gives emptiness in the universe and whose existence needs defending.

The mycelium does not dominate, but humbly interweaves, softly intrudes, contacts, finds micronised gaps, fills empty spaces, unifies the system. It creates order. Mycelium is the question, the hypothesis and the solution. Fungi are one of the best examples of existence in an ecocircular loop, they can provide us with a microbiological solution for the survival of our planet. They are with us all the time, weaving their way around the universe, filling the void, feeding the continuity necessary for existence. They give back to Mother Nature what they temporarily borrow.

In my research in support of my theses, and when I brought the specific masterpiece to life, I was in awe of the mycelium as a remarkable entity with its own emotions and perceptions. I was fascinated by the interaction between us, which is often not yet perfectly decodable, but certainly transcends the contingency. The laboratory experiments also hold crucial practical possibilities for artistically conscious packaging culture, which need further refinement. A respectful and humble collaboration with mycelium, supported by the right theoretical and ideological background, can offer a great opportunity for creative people to think and experiment, to create new products of artistic value in the spirit of eco-conscious environmentalism.

Related exhibitions, publications:

30/05-22/06/2024

Andrea Brittnek: Tactile whiteness. – solo exhibition, venue: Benedek Virág House
Curator: Lia Rozgonyi // Opening by Anett Papp DLA // *"Andrea Brittnek's exhibition takes us into the world of spatial graphic constructions and three-dimensional objectified images, in which the fusion of form and content opens up new dimensions for the viewer. Spatial graphics elements and constructions are not just decorative elements, but a means of creating a whole new narrative space through which abstract thoughts and emotions are embodied. By demonstrating the relationship between contemporary art, applied design and environmentalism, it highlights the importance of visual communication and intuitive responses based on sustainability in the context of social design. It creates diversity and continuity through interactive connections while drawing on the intersections of biology, fine art and packaging culture."* // <https://www.maraikult.hu/etn/brittnek-andrea-tapinthato-feherseg-kiallitasmegnyito/>

04-09/2022

Common Space | 2nd National Salon of Applied Arts and Design 2022 – group exhibition, venue: Múcsarnok // appearance with artworks of the 408 series // Catalogue (2022) p 145. and p 192. // <https://designart.hu/kozoz-ter-2022> // <https://mucsarnok.hu/kiallitasok/kiallitasok.php?mid=Rt3fbgoBjHw4pa0yYegYye>

10/2021

Fungi style_The material connects // Multidisciplinary responses to collaborative creation with fungi, symposium/exhibition, presentation evening // Design Week 2021 Best of METU // Curators, lecturers: Anett Papp, Andrea Brittnek, Gergely Nádas (METU-ART) // In the framework of the Best of METU programme, organised on the occasion of Design Week 2021, we created a symposium with the participation of the Textile, Graphic Design and Object Design Programs, which was jointly organised with a lecture and an exhibition of student work. Creating with living material brings a horizontal relationship between the designer and nature into the planning. The event reflected on the collective consciousness of the disciplines, in which material connects. // https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YxBQT_Ktus